Message Text

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TO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, UK

SUBJECT: UK DEFENSE CUTS

REFS: A. LONDON 08894 DTG 271733Z MAY 77; B. USDELMC 213/77 DTG 051429Z APR 77 (NOTAL)

1. ACCORDING TO REFTEL A, UK HOPED TO HAVE DETAILS OF ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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230 MILLION POUND REDUCTION FOR FY 1978/79 IN HANDS OF UK PERMREP BY 1 JUNE. REFTEL REPORTS MOD VIEW THAT UK HAS DONE AS MUCH AS CAN BE EXPECTED TO KEEP THESE LATEST CUTS AS COMPATIBLE AS POSSIBLE WITH OUR RECENT SHORT-TERM/LONG TERM INITIATIVES.

2. WE NOTE FROM REFTEL B THAT MILITARY COMMITTEE INTENDS

TO MAKE CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT OF ALL UK CUTS SINCE 1974/75 DEFENSE REVIEW AFTER UK PROVIDES DETAILS OF ITS CUTS FOR FY 1978/79. WHILE WE WOULD FIND SUCH A CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT USEFUL, WE BELIEVE THAT IN THE SHORT TIME AVAILABLE FOR NATO CONSULTATION, THAT IS, TIME BETWEEN WHEN UK INFORMS NATO OF ITS PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS AND FIRST WEEK IN SEPTEMBER WHEN UK DESIRES NATO'S VIEW, IT WOULD BE MORE CONSTRUCTIVE FOR NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES TO ASSESS THE PROPOSED FY 1978/79 CUTS AND GIVE THEIR VIEWS OF HOW UK MIGHT TAKE FORTHCOMING CUTS IN WAY TO MINIMIZE IMPACT ON

NATO'S MILITARY CAPABILITIES. THIS COULD ENTAIL IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES AND SUGGESTING ALTERNATIVES AND TRADEOFFS. CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT, IF DESIRED BY MC, COULD BE CARRIED OUT, BUT SHOULD NOT DELAY MC ACTION ON 78/79 CUTS NOR DETRACT FROM THE MAJOR EFFORT REQUIRED BY THE LONG-TERM DEFENSE PROGRAM OVER THE COMING MONTHS.

3. REQUEST MISSION DISCUSS AND CONCERT WITH USDELMC IN LIGHT OF ABOVE COMMENTS.

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